

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 AGRE-00 AID-05  
CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09  
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SS-15 ICA-20 /165 W

-----115650 251749Z/64

R 251710Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6513

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, EEC, UK

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND TO THE HARD-LINE UK POSITION ON  
FISHERIES

REF: LONDON 7550

SUMMARY. THE FISHERIES ISSUE CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR STICKING POINT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UK AND THE SEVEN CONTINENTAL EC MEMBERS AS REPORTED REFTEL. A RECENTLY PUBLISHED PARLIAMENTARY REPORT DOCUMENTS THE SITUATION OF THE UK FISHERIES INDUSTRY SINCE 1972 AND HOLDS OUT LITTLE HOPE FOR FURTHER COMPROMISE BY THE UK. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BRITISH POSITION TOWARDS A COMMON EC FISHERIES POLICY REFLECTS THE SHARP DECLINE IN FISH STOCKS, FLEET OVERCAPACITY, DENIAL OF ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL LONG-DISTANCE FISHING GROUNDS, AND ACUTE COMPETITION IN EC WATERS. THE FIFTH REPORT FROM THE EXPENDITURE COMMITTEE (THE FISHING INDUSTRY) CONCLUDES: "WE AGREE WITH THE VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS VIEW OF WITNESSES, THAT WHATEVER THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MERITS OR OTHERWISE OF UK MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY, THE EFFECTS OF THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY HAVE SO FAR BEEN BAD FOR THE UK FISHING INDUSTRY."

2. THE GENERAL EXTENSION OF NATIONAL EXCLUSIVE FISHERIES ZONES TO 200 MILES, UNFORESEEN AS IT WAS, GREATLY ALTERED THE ECONOMIC COMPLEXION OF EC MEMBERSHIP. IN 1970, WHEN

THE UK BEGAN NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO THE 1972 SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF ACCESSION, A COMMON FISHERIES POLICY (CFP) HAD JUST COME INTO EXISTENCE WHICH THE UK HAD NO SAY IN CREATING AND WHICH DID NOT SERVE UK INTERESTS: REGULATIONS PROVIDED FOR A COMMON ORGANIZATION OF THE FISHERIES MARKET (COMMON PRICE AND TRADING SYSTEM), COMMON RULES ON COMPETITION AND COMMON STRUCTURAL POLICY WITH EQUAL TREATMENT FOR NATIONALS OF OTHER EC STATES.

3. UK FISHERMEN AND HMG MAINTAIN THAT THE UK ALONE AMONG EC MEMBERS HAS TAKEN POSITIVE ACTION TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEM OF DECLINING FISH STOCKS DUE TO OVER-FISHING, THAT THE BRITISH CONSERVATION EFFORT HAS BEEN GREETED WITH DELIBERATE OVER-FISHING (AND PARTICULARLY INDUSTRIAL FISHING) BY OTHER STATES IN A MASSIVE EFFORT TO CREATE A HISTORICAL BASE FOR A FUTURE SHARE IN ANY QUOTA SYSTEM THAT MAY BE INTRODUCED.

4. THE UK CONTRIBUTES ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL RESOURCES OF FISH TO THE EC "POND." WITH ITS MAJOR FLEET OF DISTANT-WATER VESSELS, IT IS ALSO THE PRINCIPAL LOSER FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 200-MILE ZONES BY NON-EC STATES. UK FISHERMEN VIEW WITH SOME SKEPTICISM THE PURPORTED WILLINGNESS OF THEIR CONTINENTAL COUNTERPARTS TO APPLY CONSERVATION MEASURES AS RIGOROUS AS THOSE APPLIED IN THE UK. QUOTAS UNACCOMPANIED BY RESTRICTIONS ON UNCLASSIFIED

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VESSELS AND EQUIPMENT ARE DERIDED AS INEFFECTIVE.

5. THUS, THE UK HAS TAKEN A HARD-LINE POSITION IN THE EC COMMISSION, SEEKING (1) THE ALLOCATION OF A TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH IN PROPORTION TO ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EC FISHERIES "POND"; (2) COMPENSATION FOR THE UK'S LOSSES OF DISTANCE WATER FISHERIES GROUNDS, AND (3) "DOMINANT PREFERENCE" FOR UK FISHERMEN WITHIN A 50-MILE COASTAL BELT. ADDITIONALLY, THE UK HAS PRESSED FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF NONDISCRIMINATORY CONSERVATION MEASURES.

6. BY JANUARY, 1978, THE EC COMMISSION HAD CONCEDED THAT LOSSES OF DISTANT WATER FISHERIES MIGHT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FIXING CATCH QUOTAS. QUOTAS MIGHT BE ENFORCED VIA "FISHING PLANS" SPECIFYING WHICH COUNTRY'S VESSELS MIGHT FISH IN DESIGNATED LOCATIONS, AT SPECIFIC TIMES AND FOR SPECIFIC SPECIES. THIS WAS GREETED AS A "BASIS FOR DISCUSSION" BY THE UK MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD, BUT PROGRESS SINCE JAN. HAS BEEN IMPERCEPTIBLE.

7. FISHERIES INDUSTRY SPOKESMEN HAVE STOOD SQUARELY BEHIND FISHERIES MINISTER SILKIN IN HIS FIRM STANCE, AND IN HMG'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO TAKE APPROPRIATE UNILATERAL

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CONSERVATION MEASURES WHILE CONTINUING TO WORK FOR A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS, NOT-WITHSTANDING THE UK'S EC COMMITMENTS, OF A BILATERAL DEAL WITH NORWAY, AN APPROACH THAT THE PARLIAMENTARY TRADE AND INDUSTRY SUBCOMMITTEE FOUND TO MERIT EXAMINATION. THE SUBCOMMITTEE ALSO AFFIRMED THAT FISHERIES POLICY RAISED SUCH VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS AS TO JUSTIFY AN "OBDURATE DEFENSE," THAT THE UK SHOULD PROMOTE EXCLUSIVE 50-MILE FISHERIES ZONES FOR EACH EC MEMBER STATE WITHIN THE EC FISHERIES REGIME, THAT EFFECTIVE CONSERVATION SHOULD BE A KEY GOAL, AND THAT ENLARGEMENT OF THE EC SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO REDUCE FISHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING MEMBERS.

8. COMMENT: A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT IS IN NO SENSE BINDING ON THE GOVERNMENT AND GENERALLY IS NOT COMPARABLE IN SIGNIFICANCE TO CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE REPORTS. HOWEVER, THIS REPORT, BY ADVOCATING A LINE ON EC FISHERIES MATTERS WHICH IS EVEN HARDER THAN THE ONE UNCLASSIFIED

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PURSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT, IS INDICATIVE OF THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE HERE. ATTITUDES COULD, OF COURSE, CHANGE, IF THE EC WERE TO ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF FISHING PLANS CALLING FOR STRICT CONSERVATION AND WITH THE MAJOR SHARE OF QUOTAS GOING TO UK FISHERMEN.

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